

PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Genevieve McAulay

It gives me great pleasure to present the Presidents report for the financial year of 2010/2011 for the Rural Press Club Queensland.

The Club continued to grow solidly again over the past 12 months with 12 high quality events,(attached) one extra than last financial year. The Club has evolved over the past three years as it continues to cement its position in Queensland agricultural circles as a vehicle to promote key issues and messages.

This year's events included 11 in Brisbane including two breakfasts in August – the clubs traditional Ekka event and a breakfast hosting Senator Barnaby Joyce that same month to coincide with the upcoming federal election.

We also hosted for the first time a charity dinner in April at the Tattersall's club to help raise funds for flood and cyclone victims in Queensland regional areas. The charity dinner really was the jewel in clubs crowns attracting large numbers of guests and raising over \$30,000. I believe this event, although totally out of the clubs normal charter, really portrayed the club as a mature contributor to rural Queensland.

For the first time in the clubs history we invited partners to assist the club in its goal to raise money for communities devastated by past climatic events.

The Club is grateful for the support of Kubota for the donation of a ride on mower, The Ghan for not one donation of gold passes on the Ghan, but also donating a second set at no cost, Woolworths for their \$500 gift voucher, local artist Virginia Daniels for her painting, Queensland Country Life for its advertising campaign to promote the event, Tattersall's Club who provided venues and function at a minimal cost and to Carlton United Brewery who kindly donated all the alcohol for the event.

This was a first for the Club but I do believe extraordinary circumstances call for extraordinary actions and I was pleased that the club was prepared to step up to the plate and get behind this concept.

In the wrap up the \$30,000 raised was split between three worthwhile causes - \$10,000 to Tully State School to help rebuild their library that was destroyed by Cyclone Yasi; \$10,000 to the community of Theodore to help in the rebuild; \$10,000 to Charters Towers School of Distance Education to help fund school excursions.

The auction of the items was run by Noel Grant, Grant Daniel and Long who also gave up his time freely to the club. As a non political, not for profit organisation, I believe the club is in a unique position to provide such help when the circumstances require it. While I do not believe that charity dinners of this magnitude should necessarily be the norm for the club, I think the decision should be made dependent on the circumstances.

Also in this financial year the Club introduced the inaugural Rural Journalism Hall of Fame which is to recognise the contribution that rural media and individuals have made to agriculture in Queensland.

The inaugural winner was Malcolm McCosker, Queensland Country Life who celebrates 50 years of rural journalism this year which is a lifetime commitment to rural industry.

I think it is important as a press club that supports agriculture that we recognise and pay tribute to people like Malcolm who have played an integral role in shaping this industry but have sought little recognition for their efforts.

As the recipient of this award Malcolm is to be recognised in the Stockman's Hall Of Fame – this is now something for the new committee to continue.

The idea is that the hall of fame will recognise the contribution of both print and electronic media who are based in Queensland and have spent the majority of their working life in Queensland. They must, at the time be actively working as a journalist/ reporter/photographer, ideally on a fulltime basis at the time of the proposed inductions.

We envisage that the nominee's career will span at least 20 years. Only one nominee will be inducted in any given year, However if there are no worthy nominees in any year there will be no inductions

The Club has continued to consolidate its positions and its relevancy in covering issues that are likely to impact on Queensland agriculture

It has not shied away from the issues instead being prepared to meet them head on taking on topical issues like Coals Seam Gas versus agriculture, Rebuilding communities after the 2011 floods, the struggle of Queensland dairy industry and issues pertaining to beef.

In particular our biggest coup which coincided with our charity dinner was to have Campbell Newman as the guest speaker at a time when he announced his decision to run for Premier of Queensland. This was in fact the first time that he had addressed an audience in this new role.

The Ag Show breakfast which we kicked off in 2009 continues to be a successful event. In 2010 the Club hosted Drew Hutton and the then senator elect Larisa Waters debating the CSG issue versus agriculture. The event attracted up to 200 guests.

In November we again hosted a Christmas break up party making the November lunch a Christmas style event with guest speaker and all the trimmings of a Christmas feast. This event was the launch of the inaugural Rural Journalism Hall of Fame

Media

As mentioned earlier the club continues to receive strong media coverage over the financial year with stories and social pictures from a range of media outlets including AAP, Queensland Country Life, ABC Radio, Landline as well regional media including ABC Toowoomba, Rural Weekly, Toowoomba Chronicle and Dalby Herald. This has helped to continue to build our profile and create a strong brand for the club.

In particular I want to thank Rodney Green from Queensland Country Life who has contributed to the club in the way of photographs for both QCL our website and face book page.

Website

Rebecca Jennings did an excellent job in 2010/2011 of freshening up our website. Through Rebecca and then Jasmine the website continues to be a vehicle for stories and pictures from the club events.

This financial year the club also made the move into the social media setting up a face book page and a twitter address. All the clubs notices and social pics have also been loaded on to the face book page thanks to the work of Ainsley Uebergang and myself. The Face book page is an excellent avenue for all members to keep up to date with what the club is doing and to also add some feedback.

Twitter has also been successful thanks to Jasmine Hunt who has been tweeting club news and events.

As a media organisation I think it is important that we continue building on these two modes of communications to make sure we remain relevant for our members. I can only see this growing over time.

Excellence in Rural Journalism Awards

This year the club hosted its third Excellence in Rural Journalism Award open to broadcast and print media with the recipient this time attending the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists conference in Canada in September. The overall Queensland winner was Pip Courtney with Ashley Walmsley taking out the print section of the awards.

At the time the club didn't realise just how successful our state winner would be on the national scene. In a clean sweep – Pip Courtney took out the Rabobank National Broadcast award, which also meant a trip to the conference in Canada in September and Ashley Walmsley took out the national print award sponsored by John Deere which meant he also had won a trip to the IFAJ conference in Canada as well.

In the case of the clubs overall winner taking out the national award the club had made the decision that the runner up in the other medium would take the overseas trip – but somehow we found ourselves in uncharted waters. So the club went back to the judges for our runner up which was Kathy McLeish who in fact was a very close second to Pip in the broadcast section.

Kathy received the \$5000 prize of a trip to the conference in September. I think these awards are an important professional development opportunity for the States rural journalists and something that should continue.

Queensland award judges this year were Madonna King, ABC the Australian Council of Agricultural journalists immediate past President Gordon Collie and Dianne Jones, head of journalism USQ.

Pip has since go on to win the Worlds bests rural broadcaster with a piece that the judges described as outstanding.

Evan Morgan, Townsville Bulletin was the winner for this year's Photography award. There were 12 entries in the categories of 'People, Production, and Landscape.

While Evan was the overall winner with fly on the wall moment of a jockey sitting in the jockeys' room at a country race day the other winners were Rodney Green – Production and Paula Heelan – landscape.

Judges in the photography award were Gordon Collie – immediate past president to the ACAJ, Tony Gilies, AAp editor and David Lloyd, Griffith University.

Promotional Items

During my term as president the club has introduced a giveaway pen as well as the Rural Press club tie and pin. The tie has become a an icon for the club and I am continually amazed where it shows up from TV news stories, senate enquires and even the Melbourne Cup. People have been proud to wear it and if you look around any lunch or rural event you can spot a number of the silver and grey windmill ties.

Members

Our membership continues to grow from 102 in 2009/2010 to 132 in 2010/11. And to further add value to being a member of the Rural Press Club this year we introduced a separate price for members and non members to ensure those who choose to be members and pay their fees get greater benefit than those who only wish to be enrolled on our database.

The Committee during the three years of my presidency have remained committed to the Action Plan established by Kay Pearce as a mechanism for assessing the performance of the Club. (Action plan below)

I am pleased to report that I believe the Committee has now completed the action items. My recommendation to the incoming committee is to consider developing a new Action Plan to ensure the Club’s solid growth can continue to make a contribution to rural and regional Queensland’s prosperity into the future and to ensure the strong frame work left by the outgoing Committee remains in place.

| Action Plan |
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| 1. Hold ten quality events in 2008/09 that attract an average of 100 people per event |
| 2. Hold at least one out of town event |
| 3. Investigate ways to look at the ongoing development and use of the website |
| 4. Follow-up corporate members and identify why they do not renew |

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| 5. Investigate the acceptance of credit cards for membership and events payment |
| 6. Work to encourage and retain corporate members that add to Club profile and activities |
| 7. Establish a corporate governance policy |
| 8. Update and abide by the Constitution |
| 9. Evaluate the performance of the Executive Committee and update the Strategic Plan within three months of the AGM |
| 10. Establish a robust reporting system |
| 11. Investigate the issue of public liability insurance so we are clear on if and when we need insurance |
| 12. On an annual basis, where funds permit, the Club will fund a range of activities which support the activities of the Club including Awards, Creative ventures, charitable expenditure and scholarships |

In summing up I would like to commend the current Committee who has worked tirelessly to ensure to the Club continues to remain profitable, relevant and successful. There have been some huge wins last financial year – the Rural Journalism Hall of fame, the charity dinner with Campbell Newman, a breakfast in the lead up to the elections with Senator Barnaby Joyce, our biggest Ekka breakfast to date with Iain Marrs.

Financially our bank balance remains strong, (which we will hear in our treasurers report), our membership continues to grow and we are now being sort out by groups who want to speak at the club.

This is my final term as president after staying in the role for the three years set under the constitution. I have since taken on the role as the Queensland representative on the Australian Council of Agricultural Journalists and will be seeking election on the rural press club committee tonight in a non executive role so I can remain relevant to both organisations.

In stepping down as president I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank and recognise my hard working Committee for

2010/2011. They have shown great insight and we have worked very closely as a team in achieving some outstanding results for the club. Along the way we have seen some of our committee members leave – Rebecca Jennings, the club's secretary moved to South Australia, Rebecca was an outstanding secretary haven given a lot of emphasis on updating our website and designing a number of brochures and flyers. Rebecca was replaced by Jasmine Hunt who has also done a fantastic job in filling big shoes. Ainsley Uebergang who took off to Europe in August was also a valuable member of the team. Ainsley was the mainstay in aiding me during the two months that Alan was away.

I would also like to personally thank our treasurer Brad Weatherston who will be stepping down under the constitution. Thank you Brad for your guidance and exceptional financial skills. Your expertise in this field put the club in good stead.

In particular I want to thank the club's vice president, Lisa Palu who has been exceptional in her support of me during the three years. Lisa has been a great source of knowledge and has been an exceptionally hard working member of this team. I have sought her advice and expertise along the way and she has always been opening honest and forthright in her thoughts and opinion continually looking for new ideas and ways to improve the club. Lisa has also been the driving force behind the awards this year taking over from Gordon Collie. Running the journalism and photography awards for the club is no mean feat given the increased entries we received this year – a total of 30 in journalism and 12 in photography.

Not forgetting the rest of the Committee Rodney Bell for his words of wisdom and sharp legal mind, John Walters who only stepped into this role for the first year and has remained an active member and keen to just roll up his sleeves and get the job done., Pip Courtney – who has been such an unwavering member of this committee and who has received such outstanding accolades this year on the back of enormous personal tragedy. Pips journalists knowledge and ideas have been a real life blood for the committee and while Pip is not here tonight she has indicated she is keen to continue in the committee. Also thanks to Brad Pfeffer, who is away at present but is stepping down due to his work commitments – all have been a tremendous support to me as president and through everything that we have achieved together it has been a team effort.

Finally I want to thank the clubs administrator Alan Ernst who has the patience of a saint and far superior organisational skills to me. Thank you Alan for putting up with me for the past three years, trying to chase me all over Queensland when I have been on the road and always being available when I needed your help. I know you will continue to serve the new president in the same enthusiastic manner. Alan is truly an asset to the club and during my presidency I have worked to ensure that his remuneration is reviewed every year – a practice that I would recommend to the new committee continue.

In summing up I would like to thank the Rural Press Club of Queensland for allowing me the honor of being your president I hope I have served you well and hope I can continue to do this as your representative on the Australian Council of Rural Journalists.

Under my presidency the club has

- Established a regular Rural Press Club breakfast in Toowoomba at Agshow on an annual basis
- Hoisted a breakfast in Toowoomba to coincide with the Toowoomba Shows 100 years celebrations
- Established new social media channels - Face book and twitter
- Introduced a trip to the IFAJ for the winner of the Rural Press Club Qld Journalism Award – something that was then copied the following year by the ACAJ.
- Establish the Rural Journalism Hall of Fame
- Had the first charity dinner which raised \$30,000
- introduced Rural Press Club tie and pins

Finally I will leave some parting words for the incoming president from Thomas Emerson

‘Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail’.

ends

2010/2011 events

July - The Man in Beefs Hot Seat

August - Swift Action - Iain Marrs

**August - Australia- Votes but what's in it for the bush -
Senator Barnaby Joyce**

September - How the emerging green/farmers all can steer us toward sustainability - Drew Hutton and Larissa Waters (Agshow)

September - The future of rural newspaper s- Brian McCarthy

October - A journey thus far travelled with a glimpse to the future - David Foote

November - End of Year Double Act-

February - Agriculture the road ahead for 2011 - Senator Joe Ludwig

March - Rebuilding disaster ravaged rural committee- Mayor Ray brown

April- Passing the Hat around Fundraising gala dinner - Campbell Neman

May - In the trenches - Brian Tessman

June - Strategic direction for Australian Agricultural & importance of community perception Jock Laurie